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ABSTRACT

A curriculum was developed to help young tribal women develop their potential and abilities, and plan realistically for their years as members of the world of work. A model was developed which demonstrated that the curriculum can be used in tribal communities. An advisory committee of tribal women planned the program and reviewed the curriculum. Sixteen curriculum units were developed for girls and six for adults. The units focused on "Being an Indian Woman", "Being a Special Person", and "About Careers". An emphasis on tribal cultures was featured throughout the units. Members of local communities were hired as group leaders to work with 473 girls ranging from 9 to 18 years of age. Funded by special project funding by Extension Service-USDA, the program was conducted in 17 communities in Wisconsin by 27 group leaders who worked with each girl for 3 to 5 months. At the end of the program, it was found that the girls liked the learning experiences provided in the curriculum; the girls changed attitudes, gained knowledge, and made plans for the future as a result of the program; and 85% of the girls 15 to 18 years old who participated in the program from 1975 to 1977 were still enrolled in school. It was also found that the program was well received by tribal communities. (NQ)

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Choices & Careers; Free to Choose

A Career Development Project for Tribal Girls

A Summary

RC010400

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A Report on

Choices & Careers; Free to Choose
A Career Development Project for Tribal Girls

by Cathaleen Finley

December, 1977

The report has been developed as part of the project Choices & Careers, Free to Choose, a career development project for tribal girls. The project was developed with the assistance of tribal women in Wisconsin and was funded with special needs funds from Extension Service-USDA.

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION PROGRAMS
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–EXTENSION

432 NORTH LAKE STREET MADISON, WISCONSIN 53706 AREA CODE 608 262-9510

**Office of Assistant Chancellor and
Director of Cooperative Extension**

December 21, 1977

Dear Reader,

We are grateful for the opportunity afforded us in the University of Wisconsin-Extension to conduct Choices & Careers, "A Career Development Project for Tribal Girls". Since this project dealt with women of a racial minority, it was especially important and it had the potential for results of high concern to the minority interests in America.

In an effort to help enhance the status of young tribal women we developed curriculum especially for tribal girls and tested a model for using it with them. We were pleased that 17 tribal communities in Wisconsin responded favorably to the program and that almost 500 girls participated in the program. We think that the program has merit for continuation in Wisconsin and other states.

Sincerely,

Gale L VandeBerg

Gale L. VandeBerg
Assistant Chancellor and Director
Cooperative Extension Programs

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Choices & Careers; Free to Choose
A Career Development Project for Tribal Girls

The status of tribal women in Wisconsin and throughout the nation reveals the double burden of being a member of a minority group and a female. To help young tribal women develop their potential and abilities, a curriculum was developed and a model was tested for doing programming with young tribal women.

Why the Program?

--- Nine out of ten girls will work for pay.

--- At least 60 per cent will work for pay for 30 or more years.

--- Women tend to work at low-pay, low-status jobs.

--- Women earn 57 per cent of what men earn.

--- At the junior high level, girls' grades tend to become lower, and boys' grades tend to become higher.

--- About 30 per cent of Indian infants born in Wisconsin are born to teen-age mothers.

--- Some 32 per cent of Wisconsin Indian women with children under the age of 6 work for pay.

--- Girls tend not to plan for the many years of their life.

What Does the Program Do?

The program's major purpose was to design curriculum and test a model so girls will:

--- realize that they will be workers.

--- plan realistically for their years as members of the world of work.

---make decisions in their teen years that will help them prepare adequately for the world of work.

---believe that they have special talents and abilities that are unique to them.

How Was the Program Developed?

Over 300 Wisconsin tribal women attended three conferences: "Tribal Women; Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow," in 1973. Following the conferences, planning groups identified the need for a career development program for tribal girls.

How Was the Program Done in Wisconsin?

The program was funded by special project funding by Extension Service-USDA. An advisory committee of tribal women planned the program and reviewed the curriculum.

Members of local communities were employed as group leaders. The group leaders participated in two to four days of training at a central location. This was followed with on-site and area training sessions. Most group leaders met with girls once or twice a week in their communities. At two locations the program was part of the public school program. At one site it was part of a summer school program.

The UW-Extension program was conducted in 17 communities by 27 group leaders. Group leaders used the curriculum of the project to carry out the program. Additional activities included field trips and area career conferences. Group leaders worked with the following numbers of girls.

Age	Number
9-11	150
12-14	266
15-18	57
Total	473

Group leaders worked with each girl for three to five months.

What Kind of Curriculum Was Developed?

Sixteen units of curriculum were developed for girls and six were developed for adults. The units focus on "Being an Indian Woman," "Being a Special Person," and "About Careers." The units for adults were based upon those for girls. The curriculum was written by UW-Extension faculty and tribal women. An emphasis on tribal cultures is featured throughout the units.

What Are Some of the Findings and Implications of the Program?

Planning

1. Advisory committee members can help Extension develop programs which are relevant to tribal people.

2. In the initial stages of the program, it is important to plan adequately with community leaders and staff of similar programs so they understand and support the program.

Curriculum Development

Tribal people who serve as writers and artists when developing curriculum enhance the relevance of Extension materials for tribal communities.

Cooperation With Tribal Groups

1. If an Extension program is to function effectively within a tribal community, then it needs to have a relationship with existing committees and programs that have similar goals.

2. If tribal communities have input into selection of Extension staff, they are more likely to be supportive of staff, and such input

adds creditability to the program.

3. Tribal members are willing to serve as resource people.

Staff for the Program

1. Women with a variety of education levels can perform the job responsibilities of being a group leader. In the project high school dropouts were more likely to continue as group leaders than were high school graduates.

2. One can expect a high turnover of group leaders. In the project 55 percent resigned before completing the program.

3. Frequent support from professional staff and coworkers appears to prevent resignations of group leaders and to enhance the quality of their work.

4. It is important to provide taining not only in subject matter but also in the philosophy of the program and program operation.

Implementing the Program

1. The program can be done as a community program during the school year, as a special summer project, as part of a regular school program, or as part of a summer school program.

2. Group leaders need to spend time preparing to teach sessions with girls.

3. One group leader can work with a group of eight to 14 girls.

4. A program can be expected to be more successful if groups are formed from within a neighborhood.

5. The units of the curriculum are flexible in terms of time. Time spent on a unit has ranged from one to ten hours, with an average of three

to four hours.

6. A regularly scheduled meeting space is essential.

7. Transportation is essential.

8. Tribal elders are excellent resources for the program.

9. A special event for girls from several communities tends to emphasize the importance of the concepts of the program.

Results of the Program

1. Girls liked the learning experiences provided in the curriculum.

2. Girls changed attitudes, gained knowledge, and made plans for the future as a result of the program.

3. Eighty-five percent of the girls 15 to 18 years old who participated in the program from 1975 to 1977 are still enrolled in school.

Conclusions

1. Curriculum was designed to help girls develop beliefs that they have special talents and abilities and that they will be members of the world of work.

2. Curriculum was designed to help girls make decisions and plans that will enhance their opportunity to have the career of their choice.

3. A model was developed which demonstrated that the curriculum can be used in tribal communities.

4. The program is well received by tribal communities.

Summary

It appears that the project design and the curriculum could be used by Extension with tribal groups to assist young tribal women develop their

potential and abilities. As one tribal elder who served as a member of the advisory committee said,

> . . . I feel that it is really a fine program. It is beautiful, and I think it is the kind of program that every mother would be happy to have her daughter attend.

And one young tribal woman who wrote some curriculum and was employed as a group leader said,

> . . . I guess since I'm working as a home/school coordinator I've seen girls who I've thought had potential. But they seemed to think that what everyone did was have children or get married, and so these were their choices; and they would drop out of school and have children. Their potential was just not utilized at all, and I thought that this was really sad, both for them and for the community. I hope that, through this program, this will change.